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Flattering this, and from the Herodotus of the place too! All these imputations, however, can hardly be true; for even the proprietor's kiss of the stone itself, like the Wonderful Lamp in the hands of the old magician in "Aladdin," did not confer happiness, inasmuch as the castle and all its contents had not very long ago to be sold by public competition—a profanation bemoaned in an appropriate strain by Prout in an inimitable parody on Moore's "Eveleen's Bower," beginning—

"Oh! the muse shed a tear,
When the cruel auctioneer

With a hammer in his hand to sweet Blarney came!"

In 1821, Sir Walter Scott, with his son-in-law, Lockhart, Miss Edgeworth, and other celebrities, paid the homage of their worship to the load-stone, much to the chagrin of the citizens, who were eager that the Wizard should in preference inspect their noble harbour and the lions of "the spreading Lee, that, like an island fair, encloseth Cork with his divided flood," as is said in the "Faërie Queene;" or, as a more modern bard describes it:—

"As crystal its waters are pure,
Each morning they blush like a bride;
And when evening comes gray and demure,
With the softness of silver they glide.

"Of salmon and gray speckled trout
It holds such a plentiful store,
That thousands are forced to leap out,
By the multitude jostled on shore."

Surprisingly enough, however, Lockhart confounded this famous Spenserian stream with the Shannon!—a blunder which forms the text of one of those most instructive "Essays of an Octogenarian," by the erudite and amiable "J. R." of a thousand periodicals—James Roche, formerly a banker, and lately a retired citizen of Cork, which justly and affectionately regarded him as one of the most worthy of her many honoured sons, and now sorrows for his death, since April in the present year.

Renvyle Castle, in the county of Tipperary,—a remarkable ruin overlooking the sea—has a fame of another kind, however. Here again history and romance, with their thousand recollections, spring up to people the *locale* with the phantoms of the past, as if specially to heighten, as it were, the present charms of that singularly lovely landscape, by reminiscences of the turbulent and bloody deeds of which it was the site, and which are here recalled by the presence of Renvyle Castle—

"Beneath whose battlements, within whose walls,
Power dwelt amid her passions:—in proud state
Each feudal chief upheld these armed halls,
Doing his evil will, nor less elate
Than mightier heroes of a longer date."

a kind of recollection, however, much more suitable for antiquarians and bookworms, than for quiet Irish tourists in the middle of the nineteenth century.

XAVIER DE MAISTRE.

ONE January evening, 1794, in a pretty apartment of the Rue de Pô, at Turin, there met a party of eight young gentlemen to smoke, and drink, and talk as pleasantly as might be. They were soldiers. Some of them, though still young, had seen much service, and could discourse on marches and counter-marches, and all the manœuvres of war, as well as the best. But something very different from martial glory brought them together that night; they had come to hear and to criticise a new composition by a young aspirant for fame—no other than the now justly-celebrated Xavier de Maistre.

Personally, Xavier de Maistre was unknown to most of them. They had heard of him as a young soldier of promising ability, fond of adventure, and bent on improvement; they had heard that he had made a balloon ascent, and with a provincial Mongolfier had taken a journey into the air. Recently he had made another journey, not so startling, nor so perilous, but one which promised to make him far better known than the first, namely, "*A Journey Round my Room.*" He had written a book—this was the title—and by request the manuscript was to be read that night. Already the critics felt prepossessed in his favour. He was the brother of Joseph de Maistre, senator of Savoy, whose "*Eloge de Victor Amédée*" had gained him great popularity.

The Count d'Ailly, a brave but impetuous man, had been selected reader; and having chatted for some time on indifferent topics, he received the paper, unrolled it, glanced down the page with the eye of a connoisseur, and began.

Everybody knows the plan and subject of "*A Journey Round my Room,*" that small *chef-d'œuvre* which has found no rival for sixty years. It is a series of impressions and philosophical reflections upon the body and the mind, the *self* and the *other self*, the soul and the beast. It was written during captivity, when the author's only companions were a valet and a dog. What bright touches of humour there are scattered throughout the work; how carefully he tells us that his room is in the forty-fifth degree of latitude; how he abjures those people who are so much masters of their movements and ideas as to say, "To-day I will make three visits, write four letters, and finish the work I have begun;" with what quaintness he depicts every part of his little domicile, the dog, and the valet Joanetti; how his reflections seem to

leap up unbidden at the commonest incident—and how deep, and truthful, and clear they are; and how, all through, his double nature seems to haunt him—his body, the *beast*, of the "earth, earthy"—his soul wandering at will whithersoever it listeth, from the lowest pit of hell to the furthest fixed star beyond the milky way, to the confines of the universe, to the gates of chaos!

When the Count d'Ailly had achieved his task, and finished the reading of the manuscript, he was pleased to declare the author a man of talent, a man of first-rate order, and one who was destined for immortality.

Every body praised the book except a young hussar, who had listened attentively all the time, but expressed no opinion on its merit. From words of civil praise, the company became enthusiastic in their admiration of the young *littérateur*; and, excited by the punch of which he had been drinking pretty freely, and the applause which his reading had obtained, the count began to draw a critical comparison between the compositions of the two brothers—a comparison which in no degree tended to the credit of the elder.

"Messieurs," said he, "it is clear enough to us all that the '*Eloge de Victor Amédée*,' is nothing more than a wild rhapsody when compared with this '*Journey Round my Room.*' One abounds in words, gracefully piled, I grant you, but still little more than phrases; here you have thoughts, great thoughts, powerful thoughts—here the foliage is never cultivated at the expense of the fruit."

"Pardon me, sir," said the young hussar, "if I venture to differ; it seems to me that you overrate the ability of the writer. Xavier may have talent, but Joseph has something far beyond talent; he possesses genius of no common order."

The company became interested in the discussion; opposition adds to the entertainment of a critical disquisition. A combat of wit is far more agreeable than perfect unanimity.

"Sir," said the count, curling his long moustache on his finger, "you are greatly mistaken. I can detect a splendour in this rising orb which shall banish the pale light shed by the genius of the other."

The young hussar changed colour.

"The pen of Xavier," he remarked, "may amuse an idle hour, but that of Joseph is ever employed in imperishable

work. Posterity will crown him with favour when the 'Journey Round my Room' is entirely forgotten."

With this he began to recite some of the most eloquent passages from the "*Eloge de Victor Amedée*," with a power and beauty not easily described.

"You are remarkably critical, sir," said the count, ironically—the count was evidently piqued; opposition made him obstinate—"doubtless, Joseph Xavier would be greatly obliged to you for your good opinion; no doubt he would fully concur in the sentiments which you have expressed; no doubt he is already—"

"What?" cried the young man, advancing three paces, and with a flush on his hitherto pale cheeks, that made them red as crimson.

"Peace! peace!" said the others, "the count meant nothing."

"I demand," cried the young man, "that he state distinctly what he did mean."

"As you will, as you will," returned the count, "I meant to say, and say it now distinctly, that Joseph's proud heart will be filled with envy at his brother's success!"

"It's false!" cried the other, "it's a base calumny!"

"Your words are violent, sir," said the count, and he laid his hand on his sword-hilt; "doubtless a gentleman so ready with warlike words will be as ready to support them in the warlike way."

"I understand you, count," returned the young hussar, "and am ready to support everything I utter. Joseph has too noble a heart to grudge at a brother's fame, if that brother even deserves it; and he that says otherwise lies!"

"Bravely spoken," said the count, as he rapped the lid of his *comfit* box; "now to business. Your name?"

"Xavier de Maistre!"

The count drew back in mute astonishment—the rest were filled with admiration.

"You see," said the count, "that the duel is now impossible—unnecessary—must not be—the matter is cleared up."

"Not so," returned the young man, "I cannot understand why a brother may not defend a brother's reputation as well as any one less tenderly connected."

"Of course," said the count, "the word calumny, the imputation on my character, is withdrawn, and we have but to pledge each other in a bumper, and be firm friends for ever."

"Stop, sir count, stop—I will never withdraw the word, unless you first withdraw that which called forth that word."

"Impossible!"

"Then the duel must proceed. I am not ashamed to assert my brother's honour, and I am not afraid to defend it with my blood!"

So they agreed that the duel should take place upon the following morning. Xavier went home, and wrote a loving letter to his brother, telling him the whole circumstance of the case, the provocation he had received, the quarrel that had ensued, and the duel which was to decide it at dawn next day.

He sent along with the letter his manuscript, begging his brother to read it, and then commit it to the flames. As for himself, he expected to be slain—victory he did not look for; but how could he fall more nobly, so he wrote, than in defence of a man whom all France revered, and who was endeared to him by the still more loving ties of brotherhood? At early dawn he received a note from the count: it was couched in the following terms:—

Monsieur,—You have prudent friends. The governor of Turin has had me arrested, and I am to be carried beyond the frontiers of Savoy. You must feel that this circumstance must not in honour be allowed to interfere with our meeting. I shall be ready, sir, to attend you at Cambray.

"Cambray," repeated the young man, mechanically—"and why not? should not a man go forty leagues if necessary to defend a brother's honour?"

He attached a postscript to his letter, saying that it was not at Turin but at Cambray that he should meet his antago-

nist, and then, having despatched the letter and manuscript, prepared to set out for the rendezvous.

But he was arrested—arrested in the full meaning of the term—disarmed in the name of the governor, and lodged as a prisoner in a chamber of the citadel.

Not many days after, Joseph de Maistre arrived at Cambray. There he learnt that no duel had occurred, that the count was boasting of the pusillanimity of the younger brother, and still condemning the envy of the elder. Surprised and somewhat alarmed, Joseph wrote immediately to Turin, and—duels are contagious—professed his willingness to fight on Xavier's behalf. As for the book, that was already, not in the flames, but in the printer's hands—and when the news came that Xavier was in prison, Joseph hastened to him without a moment's delay.

Early one morning the garrison of the citadel were surprised by the sudden arrival of the senator of Savoy. The old walls echoed to the clatter of his horses, and half-a-dozen men were ready enough to answer all the questions the senator could ask. But they had no good news to tell. Xavier had escaped. Under cover of night he had stolen out of the citadel; they had sought for him in vain, and it appeared—they could not say for certain—but it seemed that he had taken the road to Cambray.

Allons! Joseph was on the road again. Never it seemed had horses travelled so fast before: away like the wind, over broad open country parts, down pleasant lanes, through village streets, over rustic bridges—fields and houses, towns and villages, left one after the other far behind—forward to Cambray!

At the hotel Joseph alighted. The servants were ready to render him assistance. What would monsieur please to take? Had monsieur heard the news, there was to be a duel? The Count d'Ailly and a young officer were about to fight. What was the young officer like? He was about monsieur's height, but younger, much younger; he was not unlike monsieur. The armourer had provided monsieur with a sword; he had none with him when he came. They would doubtless soon return—the wood was not far distant—a bed had been made ready for the wounded man. But there was a letter for monsieur and a book. A letter—so Joseph found—from the printer of his brother's book, and the book no other than "A Journey Round my Room."

So with this book held fast to his bosom, as if it were a precious relic, or some rare and valuable gem, the brother sought his brother. Several people accompanied him, and at length they came upon the very spot chosen for the encounter. The duel had not begun. And to make, as they say, a long story short, the duel never did begin. The matter was cleared up. The count saw well enough that he had misjudged both brothers, and the affair ended as such affairs have often ended before—in a breakfast.

As to the work, Joseph pronounced it a *chef-d'œuvre*—he declared his brother to be the *Sterne* of France—and said so many other things about the good qualities of the book and the talent and genius of Xavier, that the count confessed he had been greatly mistaken in one thing, namely, the envy of the elder brother, but that he had been right all along about the merit of the book: had he not said it from the first?—had he not predicted the fame of the author?—and did it not seem something like fame, when in so short a space of time as had intervened since the night of the quarrel, the book had been printed, and ten thousand copies sold?

Tony Johannot, with inimitable skill, has depicted a scene from this "Journey Round my Room." It is that portion in which Joannetti contemplates the picture, and propounds that query touching the peculiarity of its expression:—

"'Here Joannetti,' said I, 'hang up this portrait.'"

"He had assisted me to clean it, and yet had no more idea of all that produced the chapter on the portrait than of what goes on in the moon. He had of his own accord handed me the damp sponge, and by that apparently trifling action had sent my soul flying over a hundred millions of leagues in one

second of time. Instead of replacing the picture, he retained it to wipe it in his turn. A certain inquiring look which overspread his features, and indicated that some difficulty—a doubt he wished to have resolved—occupied his mind, attracted my attention.

"Come," said I, "what fault have you to find with the portrait?"

"None at all, sir. But yet—"

"He placed the picture against one of the shelves of my *escritoire*, then retiring a few paces, he replied,

"Would you have the kindness, sir, to explain to me why this portrait always looks straight at me, whatever part of the

are a prey to vain regrets, your place with her, it may be, is already filled up; whilst your eyes are fixed upon her portrait, and you fondly imagine that you alone (at least in the picture) monopolise her glances, the perfidious image, faithless as the original, gazes on all who approach, and smiles on every one.

"Joannetti still remained in the same attitude, waiting the explanation he had requested. I raised my head from the folds of my travelling-dress, into which I had sunk it to meditate more at my ease whilst resigning myself to the sad reflections I had been making—'Do you not perceive, Joannetti,' said I, after a moment's silence, and turning my chair towards him—'do you not perceive that a picture, being



SCENE FROM THE "VOYAGE AUTOUR DE MA CHAMBRE." FROM A DESIGN BY TONY JOHANNOT.

room I move to? In the morning when I make the bed the face is turned towards me, and if I go to the window, it keeps looking at me all the way.'

"In fact, Joannetti," said I, 'if the room were full of people, this fair lady would look every way and at every one at the same time?'

"Oh, yes, sir."

"She would smile upon all who came and went, as well as upon me."

"Joannetti made no answer. I stretched myself in my easy chair, and, letting my head fall on my breast, I resigned myself to very serious meditations. What a light breaks in on me! Poor lover! whilst you, far removed from your mistress,

a plane surface, the rays of light passing off from every point of that surface . . . ?'

"Joannetti, at this explanation, opened his eyes so wide that the whole pupil became visible; he half opened his mouth also;—these two actions indicate in the human face, according to the celebrated Le Brun, the highest degree of astonishment. Without a doubt it was my beast that had entered upon such a dissertation, for my soul knew well enough that Joannetti knew nothing of plane surfaces, and still less of rays of light; the monstrous dilation of his eyelids recalled me to myself. I suffered my head to sink down again within the collar of my travelling-dress, and there so ensconced myself that scarcely any part of it was left visible."